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Letter dated 20 March 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to bring to your attention the attached letter, dated 13 March 2012, from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mr. Alexander Vershbow, transmitting the report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 October to 31 December 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

In accordance with paragraph 20 of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I attach a report on the operations of the Kosovo Force covering the period from 1 October to 31 December 2011 (see enclosure).

I would appreciate it if you would make this report available to the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Vershbow**

Enclosure

Report to the United Nations on operations of the Kosovo Force

Introduction

1. The present report on the Kosovo Force (KFOR) is provided in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and covers the period from 1 October to 31 December 2011.

2. As at 31 December 2011, the total number of KFOR troops in theatre was 5,700. This includes an Operational Reserve Force battalion, which was deployed in theatre in the aftermath of the events of July 2011 in the northern part of Kosovo.

Security situation and operations

3. The overall security situation in theater by the end of the reporting period remained calm, but volatile in the northern part of Kosovo.

4. On 12 October 2011, the Commander of KFOR met the Serbian Chief of Staff in the context of the Joint Implementation Commission to discuss the security situation in the northern part of Kosovo. On 16 October 2011, the Commander of KFOR also met with the Kosovo Serb mayors of the four municipalities in the northern part of Kosovo to insist on the immediate restoration of the freedom of movement for all and the removal of roadblocks by Kosovo Serb demonstrators.

5. On 31 October 2011, the Commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples decided to extend the presence of the Operational Reserve Force battalion in Kosovo until 31 December 2011. On 8 November 2011, KFOR launched an operation to seize a roadblock in the vicinity of crossing point Gate 1. During this action, a KFOR unit was violently confronted by Kosovo Serb demonstrators and KFOR troops were forced to use tear gas to control the security situation.

6. On 10 November 2011, the Commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples tasked the Commander of KFOR to continue operations to maintain and establish access control points, and selectively remove roadblocks, along the main supply roads to crossing points Gate 1 and DOG 31, in order to create the conditions necessary for restoring unrestricted freedom of movement and a safe and secure environment for all, pursuant to Council resolution 1244 (1999).

7. On 28 November 2011, in accordance with its mandate, KFOR started an operation to remove a roadblock set up by Kosovo Serb demonstrators in the municipality of Zubin Potok, in the northern part of Kosovo. In reaction to the KFOR operation to restore unrestricted freedom of movement, Kosovo Serb demonstrators used small arms fire against KFOR troops. This resulted in the wounding of 25 KFOR soldiers. In self-defence, KFOR soldiers responded to the violence by Kosovo Serb demonstrators by using water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas.

8. On 2 December 2011, KFOR representatives met with the mayor of Zubin Potok to discuss the security situation in his municipality and to insist on the need to unconditionally restore the freedom of movement for all in the northern part of Kosovo. By 5 December 2011, some of the roadblocks in the Zupce area had been removed by Kosovo Serb demonstrators. Later in December, KFOR conducted several road convoy operations to crossing points Gate 1 and DOG 31, using the

BULL, HEN and CHICKEN axes. While all convoys with only KFOR vehicles passed the roadblocks without problem, some of the convoys comprising vehicles of KFOR and of the European Union Rule of Law Mission, in particular those travelling to crossing point DOG 31, were blocked and forced to turn back.

9. On 21 December 2011, the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe visited Kosovo, where he received briefings from the Commander of KFOR on the current security situation in Kosovo. In addition, the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe visited KFOR troops at Camp Bondsteel.

New North Atlantic Treaty Organization Tasks

10. From 24 to 28 October 2011, the Military Civilian Advisory Division of the Kosovo Force and the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) jointly completed the harmonization phase of their fourth joint assessment. In this phase, KFOR and KSF assessed results on seven primary objectives for the full operational capability of KSF.

11. In mid-October 2011, a first draft of the Pension Law for KSF members was put on hold on the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). An alternative second draft was developed as a result and sent to IMF for further review and discussion. On 24 October 2011, the KSF Medical Service began the medical screening of over 1,300 KSF members whose contracts were about to expire. KSF members must pass the medical screening and a physical fitness test in order to be considered for a contract extension. Physical fitness tests started on 29 November 2011 and as at 2 December 2011 approximately 1,000 personnel had completed the screening. Approximately 100 members were tested each day. In addition, medical mentors of the Military Civil Advisory Division conducted spot checks of the medical examinations and attended the medical review boards to guarantee a fair and transparent process.

12. In mid-October 2011, the KSF Land Force Component started to work on the 2012 KSF annual training plan. As requested by KFOR, a new KSF field training exercise was scheduled for early 2012. The KSF annual training plan for 2012 was completed in late November 2011.

13. On 27 October 2011, staff of the KSF Hazardous Material Centre received specialized chemical biological radiological and nuclear training in Bulgaria by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The specific course is affiliated with the NATO Civil Emergency Planning Work Programme and supported by KFOR.

14. On 22 November 2011, a ceremony was held to mark the handover of responsibilities from the outgoing KSF Commander, Lieutenant General Selimi, to the new commander, Major General Kastrati. During this ceremony, the Commander of KFOR publicly mentioned that KFOR had recently sent a letter to the Commander of Allied Joint Force Command Naples advising of the significant progress achieved to date by KSF and making a positive recommendation vis-à-vis a future declaration of full operational capability for KSF within its existing mandate.

15. On 3 December 2011, KSF issued an order for a second recruitment campaign for the KSF reserve component, to begin with a media information campaign on 21 January 2012. The final selection for the process should be completed by 1 June 2012. KSF requested the KFOR Military Civil Advisory Division to support the selection process. The first recruitment campaign for the Force's reserve component

took place in late 2010, in which a total of 148 candidates were selected. That group recently finished a five-week basic training course.

Summary

16. During the reporting period, KFOR, in close coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Police, continued to work towards guaranteeing a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all citizens in Kosovo. The situation in the northern part of Kosovo remained volatile and several roadblocks continued to hamper the freedom of movement of the local population, as well as of KFOR and of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, even if overall freedom of movement had relatively improved by the end of the reporting period. Illegal bypasses at the administrative boundary line and smuggling activities remained a problem during the reporting period. KFOR continued to closely monitor the security situation on the ground and maintain its deterrent posture in order to react quickly and decisively if necessary.